

Message Text

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11

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-03 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01

/181 W

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R 272220Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6503

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SANJOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS SAN SALVADOR 3882

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN AGRA ES

SUBJ: EFFECTS OF HURRICANE FIFI

(GUATEMALA ALSO FOR ROCAP)

1. SUMMARY: DAMAGES FROM HURRICANE FIFI, APART FROM HUMAN LIFE LOST, APPEAR NOT SERIOUS. AGRICULTURAL CROPS MOST AFFECTED WERE COTTON, BEANS AND COFFEE, BUT NONE SERIOUSLY; NET EFFECT ON SUGAR PROBABLY POSITIVE. DAMAGES OCCURRED TO ROADS WATER AND ELECTRIC SERVICES, AND HOUSING BUT AGAIN, NONE CRITICAL. INITIALLY A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES SERVED BY SECONDARY ROADS AND THE MAJORITY OF THOSE SERVED BY DRY-WEATHER ROADS WERE CUT OFF BUT ACCESSABILITY IS VIRTUALLY BACK TO NORMAL. WATER SERVICES ARE REDUCED IN THE SURBURBS OF SAN SALVADOR DUE TO PUMPING FAILURES. APEAT FROM

NUMEROUS FALLEN RETRINING WALLS, TREES, ETC. AFFECTING MANY

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RESIDENTIAL AREAS, MOST OF THE ESTIMATED 5,000 UNITS HOUSING

LOST WERE SO-CALLED "MARGINAL HOUSES" WHICH BY THEIR CONSTRUCTION WERE UNABLE TO WITHSTAND HEAVY RAINS (11 INCHES IN MOST INTENSIVE 48 HOUR PERIOD) OR, AS IN MANY CASES, WERE SITUATED IN RAVINES SUBJECTED TO FLOODING. IT IS NOT EXPECTED THAT THE PRESIDENTIALLY-COORDINATED FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE WILL HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE OF HURRICANE EFFECTS UNTIL SECOND WEEK OF OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

2. AGRICULTURAL LOSSES: THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (MAG) HAS

BEGAN AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF DAMAGES TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. RESULTS ARE PROMISED BY OCTOBER 4, BY THE FOLLOWING AGATT ESTIMATES, BASED ON PERSONAL VISITS TO FLOOD AREAS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR, MAY FILL THE GAP UNTIL OFFICIAL DATA ARE AVAILABLE.

A) COTTON: ABOUT 5,200 ACRES IN THE LOWER VALLEYS OF THE

RIVERS LEMPA, SAN MIGUEL AND JIBOA HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED, WITH ABOUT 1,000 CONSIDERED COMPLETELY LOST. TIMELY RAINS TO REMOVE MUD COULD HELP CONSIDERABLY, BUT FOR THE MOMENT WE THINK LOSSES COULD BE ABOUT 4,800 BALES. AT AN EXPORT PRICE OF \$50 CWT, THIS WOULD BE \$1.2 MILLION LOSS IN EXCHANGE.

(B) COFFEE: MANY COFFEE AREAS ARE STILL ISOLATED, BUT FIRST REPORTS INDICATE THAT TOTAL AMOUNT OF PRODUCTION LOST IS MINIMAL,

AMOUNTING TO LESS THAN FIVE PERCENT OF CROP. THE AREA OF SANTA ANA, WHERE MOST COFFEE IS PRODUCED, REGISTERED ONLY 34 MILLIMETERS OF RAIN DURING 24 HOURS OF GREATEST RAINFALL IN

REST OF COUNTRY. SAN MIGUEL AREA, IN CONTRAST, HAD ABOUT

266 MM. LATTER IS AREA PREVIOUSLY AFFECTED BY DROUGHT.

(C) SUGAR: DAMAGE IS MINIMAL; ANZ LOSSES WILL BE MORE THAN OFFSET BY INCREASED PRODUCTION RESULTING FROM ABUNDANCE OF WATER.

(D) TOBACCO: DAMAGE MINIMAL.

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(E) BASIC GRAINS: LOSS OF CORN, WHICH HAD BEEN DOUBLED OVER AND LEFT IN THE FIELDS TO DRY, COULD GO AS HIGH AS 25,000 METRIC TONS, BUT IS PROBABLY LESS PRODUCTION WAS ADVERSELY AFFECTED EARLIER IN THE YEAR BY DROUGHT.

(F) SORGHUM AND RICE OUTPUT ARE APPARENTLY AFFECTED ONLY MINIMALLY. BEAN PRODUCTION COULD BE REDUCED SUBSTANTIALLY

IF FIELDS REMAIN WET FOR PROLONGED PERIOD. LOSSES OF BEANS COULD BE AS HIGH AS 2,000 MT. COUNTRY SHOULD BE ON AN IMPORT BASIS FOR CORN, RICE AND BEANS BEFORE HARVEST TIME IN 1975.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE AND HOUSING LOSSES:

(A) WATER AND SEWER SERVICES ARE GENERALLY UNAFFECTED. A PUBLISHED ESTIMATE OF DAMAGES OF \$400,000 WAS CHARACTERIZED TO US BY ANDA AS VERY HIGH. OF COURSE MANY LOCALITIES LOST SERVICES DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE RAINS, BUT REPAIR STILL NEEDED IS LIMITED TO RESTORATION OF WATER PUMPING FACILITIES AT TWO SAN SALVADOR SUBURBS AND PERHAPS AN ABNORMALLY HIGH LEVEL OF SEWER/STORM SEWER MAINTENANCE. NO PROBLEMS OUTSIDE SAN SALVADOR ARE REPORTED.

(B) ROADS: THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS ESTIMATED DAMAGES

AT \$650,000. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT BOTTLENECK ON PRIMARY ROADS IS WEAKENED BRIDGE OVER THE RIO HUIZA AT KM. 48 ON THE "LITORAL" (CA-2) NEAR LA LIBERTAD (PASSAGE IS RESTRICTED TO LIGHT VEHICLES) AND THIS AFFECTS TRUCK TRANSPORT BETWEEN LA LIBERTAD AND COMALAPA. OTHER WEAKENED BRIDGES ARE THOSE ON CA-2 AT KM. 45 (RIO TIHUAPA) AND ON CA-1 WEST OF SAN

SALVADOR. WORK IS PROGRESSING ON CLEANING UP NUMEROUS LANDSLIDES AND RESTORING DRAINAGE.

(C) IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF HOUSES LOST OR SERIOUSLY DAMAGED. ONE PUBLISHED ESTIMATE IS 5,000 HOUSES LOST, VIRTUALLY ALL BEING OF FRAGILE CONSTRUCTION (SCRAP WOOD, CARDBOARD, CANE). IT WAS CHIEFLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE

DESTRUCTION OF THESE "MARGINAL" HOUSING UNITS BY FLASH-FLOODING IN RAVINES THAT THE ESTIMATED MAXIMUM 50 DEAD LOST THEIR LIVES.
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MANY RELIEF EFFORTS INCLUDE COLLECTION OF CARDBOARD AND OTHER SCRAP MATERIAL TO PERMIT THE RAPID RECONSTRUCTION OF SIMILAR STRUCTURES.
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